Connections
A Publication for Employees of the Missouri Department of Transportation

July 30, 2015

Central Office

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Team Talk

by Roberta Broeker

Click above to watch Interim Director Roberta Broeker talk about the unexpected increase in transportation revenue.

Hello Team MoDOT!

By now you've heard of the good news we shared last week regarding transportation revenues for fiscal year 2015. State taxes from fuel, vehicle sales and vehicle and driver licensing fees are up 4.5 percent from what we projected, and we received $47 million more in state transportation revenues than we expected. We can thank the improving economy and cheaper gas prices for the increase in revenue. I'm very excited about this because it means we can match our federal funds in 2017. We will be talking to the Commission in August about the best way to use the funds to take care of our system today and in the future.

We still face the long-term challenge of insufficient funding for transportation in Missouri, but I'm glad to have some breathing room while we continue to educate the legislature and the public on the need. You've helped us with that over the last year, and your voice is powerful. You are the people who interact with countless citizens and can explain the day-to-day challenges you face with keeping the system in good condition.

Thank you for everything you do. The weather has been brutally hot, and I know that has a big impact on you. Stay safe and hydrate!

Earn $500 for One Hour's Work!

by Jim Dickson

That's right. By spending one hour or less filling out an Innovations Challenge entry form, you could pocket up to $500. This year's first-round competitions start Aug. 3, and you could be one of 18 winners in your district or Central Office. That first-round win can earn you as much as $75 and the chance to compete at the statewide showcase for as much as an additional $425. All you need to do is share a few details on how you've put a new twist on getting your work done better, faster, cheaper and safer.

You can cash in on your innovations in the areas of:

- Tools and Equipment - items fabricated or modified by MoDOT employees
- Projects - efforts resulting in exceptional results for transportation users or internal operations
- Productivity - office and field processes, materials and products.

Innovations Challenge

Not sure what might qualify as a winning innovation? Check out all the winning innovations from the past eight years on Innovations Challenge SharePoint page.

Need help putting your innovation entry together? Contact your local program coordinator. You can find the name of your local program coordinator on the Innovations Challenge SharePoint page.

Finally, here are some tips from previous Innovations Challenge winners:

- Don't think your innovation is too small to count. Simple solutions to everyday problems can have a big impact. If you had the problem, it's likely your solution may work for other department employees.
- Don't assume everyone knows about your innovation. Even if you've been using your innovation for some time, it doesn't mean anyone else has found the same solution.
- Don't create your innovation in a vacuum. Get input on your innovation from co-workers, counterparts in other areas and technical experts.
- Don't just tell how your innovation works. Show it in action. Think about showing a new employee how your innovation works with a series of photos or a simple video.

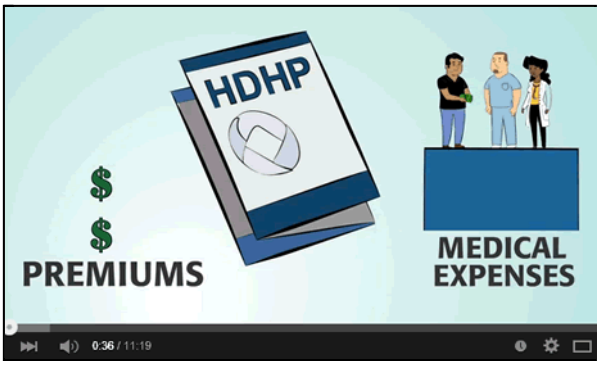
Don't use time as your excuse not to submit an innovation. Use your local program coordinator to help put your innovation submission together.

District and Central Office competitions
Aug. 3 – Dec. 15*
First-round evaluations
Dec. 15 – Jan. 7
First-round winners announced
Jan. 13
Second-round statewide evaluations
Jan. 14 – Jan. 28
Showcase participants announced
Feb. 15
Innovations Challenge Showcase
Spring 2015
**Districts may choose a different cutoff date.*

New Medical Plan Option for 2016

by Jeff Padgett

I am pleased to announce the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission has approved a High Deductible Health Plan (HDHP) with a Health Savings Account (HSA) to be offered in addition to our traditional PPO medical plan starting January 1, 2016. A HDHP with a HSA option has proven to be beneficial for individuals interested in continuing to have comprehensive medical coverage with a lower monthly premium. Enrollees can capitalize on the additional tax savings and investment opportunities available through the HSA.



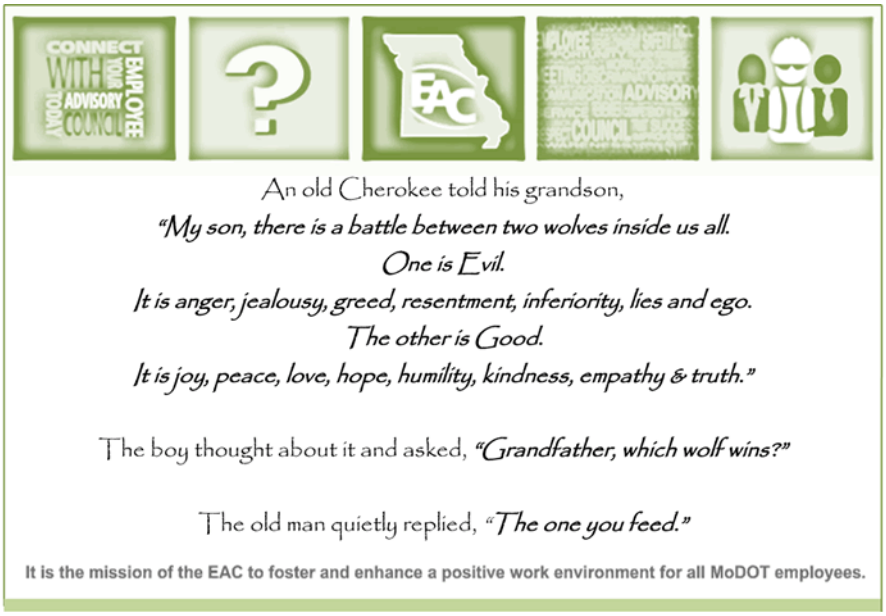
Click above to watch a video that explains how the HDHP plan with HSA option works. It's also located on the benefits website - Employee Benefits.

There will be an open enrollment period from Oct. 1 through Nov. 13 for coverage beginning Jan. 1, 2016. We are working with your district and division insurance representatives to coordinate workshops in your area. You are encouraged to attend one of these workshops to find out more information about how a HDHP and HSA compare to our PPO plan. The new option will also be discussed during employee fall meetings.

Information is available on the Employee Benefits website - Employee Benefits.

You are encouraged to review the information available on-line and attend the workshops, once scheduled, in order to make an informed decision on which plan option is best for you and your family.

If you have additional questions, please contact our staff in Employee Benefits at 877-863-9406.



Changes in MAPS Process

by Matthew Sonner

In late 2014, the Employee Advisory Council (EAC) began a process to determine what (if any) changes employees would like to see made to the performance management process and MAPS system. After gathering initial data, the EAC distributed a final survey to all employees in April 2015. After tabulating over 1,700 responses, the EAC worked with the senior management team (SMT) to develop the following final recommendation for performance management process improvements:

- Provide formal MAPS ratings and feedback once per year, in the spring, prior to June 1. These ratings and feedback will be documented in an electronic system.
- Continue to use the current format of Expectations, Competencies, Feedback and Ratings.
- Use the current rating scale (Outstanding, Highly Successful, Successful, Needs Improvement, Unacceptable), providing Competency ratings and an Overall rating.
- Conduct an informal performance feedback session to discuss performance progress in the fall/winter before Jan. 1. This feedback session should be documented in the employee's MAPS file.
- These changes are effective immediately, with no formal rating given in the fall of 2015, and the next formal rating being provided in spring 2016.

The EAC and Human Resources Director also reviewed recommendations from the Employee Development team which included several desired improvements to the electronic MAPS system. Based on these recommendations, and the final changes to the performance management process, further efforts will be undertaken by the Human Resources Division and the Information Systems Division to develop the best options for making long term system improvements that meet the needs of supervisors and employees.

Changes to the MAPS system and a process for moving forward with ratings in spring 2016, as well as all necessary policy changes, will be communicated in the coming months.

Attention 2015 Service Award Recipients!

Starting Aug. 3, 2015, the service award vendor will begin mailing out your brochure packet with the gifts you are eligible to receive. Please keep your eyes open for this packet to arrive at your home address.

Instructions for placing your order will be included in the packet.

Safe & Sound Bridge Program Wins DBIA National Design-Build Project/Team Award

The Design-Build Institute of America (DBIA), the only organization that defines, teaches and promotes best practices in design-build, announced its 20th annual Design-Build Project/Team Award Winners. Recognized for exemplary collaboration and integration in design-build project delivery, the award-winning projects were evaluated by a distinguished panel of industry experts.

MoDOT's Safe & Sound Bridge Program won in the category of Transportation (Non-Aviation). MoDOT and its partners were given the award. The Design-Builder was KTU Constructors, a joint venture of Kiewit Western Co., Traylor Brothers Inc. and United Constructors Inc., with HNTB and the LPA Group (a division of Michael Baker Jr. Corp.).

"To win a National Design-Build Project/Team Award, projects must not only achieve budget and schedule goals, but also demonstrate advanced and innovative application of design-build best practices," said Lisa Washington, CAE, Executive Director/CEO of DBIA. "This year's winning projects exemplify Design-Build Done Right in their design-build process, excellence in design and extraordinary teaming performance. The jury's difficulty in choosing winners demonstrates how much design-build expertise has expanded since we started the awards program in 1996."

The 2015 Design-Build Project/Team Awards showcase design-build best practices and celebrate the achievements of owners and design-build teams in nine categories across the spectrum of horizontal and vertical construction. These categories include: aviation, civic/assembly buildings, commercial/office buildings, industrial/process/research facilities, educational facilities, healthcare facilities, rehabilitation/renovation/restoration, transportation and water/wastewater.

Law Enforcement Traffic Safety Advisory Council Conference Held at Lake of the Ozarks

by Kelly Jackson

Law enforcement officials from across the state gathered recently at Lake of the Ozarks for their annual conference. The LETSAC conference provides traffic enforcement officers with continuing education in the field of law enforcement and allows for interaction between the officers and members in sharing technology, information and ideas.

Guest speakers covered topics in the areas of technical, interpersonal and legal issues. National motivational speakers offered encouragement and adoration for the specialized work law enforcement perform on a daily basis.

LETSAC is a law enforcement advisory group that provides recommendations, direction and guidance on statewide traffic safety issues to MoDOT's Traffic and Highway Safety Division. Membership is granted to every law enforcement agency in the state of Missouri.

For additional information, log on to http://www.mopca.com/mpca.nsf/

Calling all Photographers and Videographers!

The deadline for submitting photos and videos to AASHTO's annual Faces of Transportation photography competition is coming up quickly!

This year's competition includes three new categories: "People Building America" "People Touring America," and "Innovators in Transportation." A total of seven awards will be presented this year. A $125 cash prize will be awarded to the best photograph in each of the three categories. $500 cash prizes will be presented to the winners of both the People's Choice and the Best Overall Photograph awards. Video prizes of $150 each will be presented to a Novice and a Professional winner.

AASHTO strongly encourages every submission to prominently feature people designing, constructing, using and enjoying the nation's transportation systems. All entries should represent the positive effects of all modes of transportation on individuals and communities. Photographs which include recognizable individuals must be accompanied with a model release form and, regardless of category, all photos must include a caption which describes the scene. Failure to meet these requirements may lead to disqualification.

One of MoDOT's past submittals for AASHTO's Faces of Transportation competition. Photo by Cathy Morrison.

All entries must be received by Aug. 7. Judging will begin on Aug. 8 and end Aug. 31. The general public will vote for the People's Choice Award at the Faces of Transportation web site, www.facesoftransportation.org. Winners will be announced and prizes awarded at the TransComm Meeting in Annapolis, MD in September.

Enter today!

What's Happening

Meal Per Diem Increase

Effective Aug. 1, 2015, the In-State Meal Per Diem will be increased $4 per day per Missouri location. The increase equates to an additional $1 for breakfast and lunch and $2 for dinner. Please note that the Out-of-State Meal Per Diems will remain the same and will not be increased on August the 1st. The new rates only apply for in-state meals incurred on or after Aug. 1, 2015. The State web page will be updated on Aug. 1, 2015 to reflect the changes.

If you have questions contact Amy Blankenship (573) 751-3302.

July Retirements

Raefeal E. Crider – NE – 9 years
Mitchell S. Miller – NE – 25 years
Gary L. Peasel – NE – 26 years
Ronald D. Reynolds – KC – 11 years
Donald R. Payne – CD – 31 years
Dianna L. Johnson – CD – 30 years
David R. Shoemake – SL – 31 years
Charles L. Rowden – SL – 28 years
Charles L. Vollmer – SL – 38 years
Kenneth R. Maass – SL – 23 years
Keith R. Gilmore – SW – 30 years
Joseph F. Crader – SE – 25 years
Clifford Shannon – SE – 10 years
Kirk A. Bennett – SE – 27 years

In Memoriam

James Davis – Active Employee
SW District – July 11
Sally Howard
former D8 – May 19
Walter Sommerer
CO – June 26
Robert Kempker
former D5 – June 26
Charles Burton
former D9 – July 3
Donald Tipton
former D4 – July 7

Lawrence Schneider
former D6 – June 23
Edward Ausmus
former D2 – June 24
Bobby Smiley
former D3 – June 24

John Freiling, Sr.
former D3 – June 29
Donald Reese
former D3 – June 29
Elsworth Lawrence
former D9 – July 1

Thomas L Arcadipane
former D7 – July 7
Gerald Dorris
former D9 – July 12
Allen Barton
former D9 – July 12

Connections

The mission of Connections is to be a source of Missouri Department of Transportation news and feature articles that connect employees statewide.

Communications - MoDOT
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Editor: Tammy Wallace

Comments & Suggestions

We would like to hear from you. Send comments and suggestions to Tammy Wallace at Tammy.Wallace@modot.mo.gov.

Mission

Our mission is to provide a world-class transportation experience that delights our customers and promotes a prosperous Missouri.

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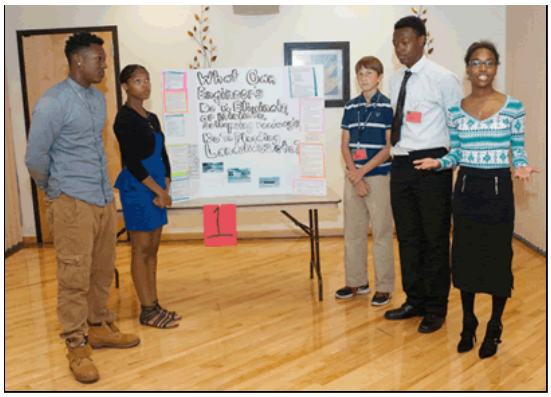
MoDOT's Youth Transportation Conference

by Melissa Black

Twenty-nine high school students participated in MoDOT's 14th Annual Youth Transportation Conference July 19-24 in Jefferson City. The conference, which is put together by the Equal Opportunity and Diversity Division, promotes transportation and engineering careers to youth.

"We want to increase interest in civil engineering in our youth today," said Elizabeth Reed, Youth Transportation Conference coordinator and senior Human Resources specialist in EODD. "We get the opportunity to expose new people to our field of work who wouldn't have had these types of opportunities otherwise." This was Reed's ninth year coordinating the conference.

The transportation conference was open to all students from across the state entering ninth to 12th grade in the upcoming school year. Students spent the week in various hands-on transportation competitions like magnetic levitation, operation egg drop, concrete canoes, the retaining wall activity and the Popsicle tower. They also visited the University of Missouri-Columbia and the Missouri Science and Technology-Rolla campuses to check out their engineering programs. The agenda included time in the MoDOT Materials Lab learning about various MoDOT careers.



Conference attendees give group presentations on the transportation solutions they identified specific to Missouri.

At the end of the week-long camp, parents were invited to hear their children's group presentations on transportation solutions to problems students identified specific to Missouri. These presentations included topics on Interstate-70, natural disasters, bridges and flooding, earthquakes and alternative winter roadway solutions. MoDOT judges for these presentations included State Bridge Engineer Dennis Heckman, State Design Engineer Eric Schroeter and Financial Services Director Brenda Morris.

Throughout the week, winning students were given points during the competitions and the two top-scoring students were honored at Friday's lunch in front of parents and MoDOT staff. Marissa Pratt, a senior at Rosati Kain High School in St. Louis, won first place, and Spencer Black, a sophomore at Lee's Summit North in Lee's Summit, won second place. Black is the son of MoDOT Kansas City District Communications Manager Melissa Black. Six relatives of MoDOT employees attended the camp.

Non-Roadway Construction Electronic Procurement System Project

by Rebecca Jackson

MoDOT is participating with the rest of Missouri's government agencies with the implementation of a new electronic procurement system for non-roadway construction solicitations. A contract was awarded to Perfect Commerce in mid-April. This new system is branded:

MissouriBUYS
Statewide eProcurement System

Through the eProcurement System, the Office of Administration desires to implement a best-in-class eProcurement solution to automate the procurement and purchasing process, enable a more strategic approach to procurement for the state and fully integrate and interface with the current SAMII financial system. The state seeks to accomplish the following through this system:

- Improve processing efficiency through a modern, web-based system
- Integrate contract management, purchasing and reporting to identify effective spending
- Improve reporting and business intelligence to identify what is procured and the associated cost
- Improve customer interaction with state agency users, improve local governments' ability to purchase off of state contracts and improve the system for the business community.

The new system will be comprised of three modules that will be phased in over a twelve month period: 1) Vendor Registration; 2) Solicitation; and 3) Order/Invoice Management. The Vendor portal will go live in mid to late August 2015. State agencies will be integrated into the solicitation phase in waves and MoDOT is included in the third wave scheduled for October 2015. The order and invoice process phase is slated to begin in December 2015.

There are several MoDOT representatives involved in the implementation of this system:
General Services – Robin Warren, Cindy Norman and Rebecca Jackson
Financial Services – Suzette Kempker and Amy Blankenship
Information Systems - Marisa Senevey, Amy Binkley and Amy Wilson

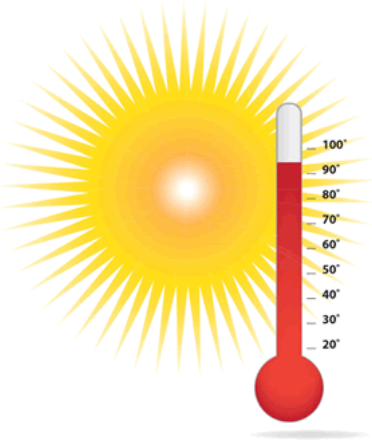
Feel free to reach out to these team members if you have any questions or receive any inquiries related to this system. For additional information, the Office of Administration has created the following website and will be adding information to this site on a regular basis.

For additional information, visit http://missouribuys.mo.gov/.

More July Health and Safety Tips
Working in the Heat

Every year, thousands of heat-related illnesses, such as heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat cramps, fainting and heat rash, can be prevented by taking some simple precautions. Many conditions affect an individual's heat tolerance, including temperature, humidity, airflow and radiant heat from the sun. Personal factors such as age, weight, physical fitness and other medical conditions must also be considered. Fans, ventilation systems, dehumidifiers and air conditioners regulate heat indoors, but outside work requires more consideration. Keep the following tips in mind when working outside:

Work Practices
Alternating work with periods of rest in a cool area can help you avoid heat stress. If possible, the heaviest work should be scheduled during the cooler parts of the day. Supervisors should be trained to detect early signs of heat stress and permit workers to rest if they begin feeling the symptoms of excessive heat.



Drinking Water
Sweating is the primary way your body cools itself. But too much sweating can result in large water losses. Dehydration can be prevented by drinking at least eight ounces of water every 30 minutes. Don't wait until you are thirsty to start replacing lost water. By that time, it's too late to catch up.

Clothing
Always wear loose-fitting clothing made from breathable fabrics. This allows air to circulate around your body and prevents heat rash.

Periodic Breaks
Be sure to take short breaks if you feel fatigued, confused or experience nausea. These symptoms could be warning signs of a serious heat-related disorder.

Signs and Symptoms
Heat Stroke: Skin that is red, dry or hot, confusion, fainting, seizures and often lack of sweating.
First Aid: Call 911, move them to a cooler area, loosen or remove excess clothing, cool by any means, provide water if conscious and stay with the individual.

Heat Exhaustion: Excessive sweating, headache, nausea, dizziness, weakness, irritability and thirst.
First Aid: Move employee to a cooler area, have them drink water, cool with ice packs or compress, stay with them and seek medical attention if symptoms do not improve after 60 minutes.

Central Office Happenings

New Medical Plan Option Workshops

As mentioned in Jeff Padgett's email last week, High Deductible Health Plan (HDHP) workshops are being offered to provide employees more information about how a HDHP with a Health Savings Account differs from our current PPO Plan option.

Benefits staff will present information about the new option at several division and district meetings in the coming months. For those of you not able to attend your division or district meeting you can enroll in one of the workshops listed below by logging on the new MoDOT U. Once logged in you will need to perform a search for "HDHP Workshop" and pick which class you would like to attend. More workshops will be added based on demand.

Aug. 18 - 9 to 11 a.m. - CO Room 303
Aug. 20 - 1 to 3 p.m. - CO Purple Room

Coverage under the new HDHP will start Jan. 1, 2016. Anyone wanting to enroll will need to do so during Open Enrollment, which starts Oct. 1 and will run through Nov. 13.

These meetings are intended to provide you with enough information to help you make an informed decision on which plan option is best for you and your family. Your attendance is not mandatory and you are not required to switch plans.

Additional information on this new option is available on the Employee Benefits website at http://www.modot.org/newsandinfo/benefits.htm.

First Aid/CPR/AED Classes

Monday Aug. 17
Noon to 3:30 p.m.
601 West Main Street - Training Room B.

Space is limited, so check with your supervisor, then sign up through the new LMS Student Center MoDOT U (LMS Course Code 24597, titled First Aid/CPR – Infant & CPR/AED – Adult &Child.)

Contact Allison Heintz - allison.heintz@modot.mo.gov or 751-526-7860.

Second Annual Slow Pitch Softball

WHO: Open to all MoDOT employees and their significant others.
Team minimum of 10 people. Limited to 15 teams.
Full rosters will reserve a team spot.
WHEN: Saturday, Sept. 19
8 a.m. (depending on number of teams)
PRICE: $100 per team. To pay the umpires and for the field.
All remaining money will be donated to the Charitable Campaign.
WHERE: Binder Sports Complex, 300 Binder Lake, Jefferson City.
RULES: A minimum of one girl must be on the playing field. ASA rules.

Complete a roster and send to Kevin Kiesling by August 21.

Click here for Tournament Flyer
Click here for Tournament Roster

For questions, contact:
Amanda Woody - Amanda.Woody@modot.mo.gov or (573) 526-5617
Kevin Kiesling - Kevin.Kiesling@modot.mo.gov or (573) 526-5634

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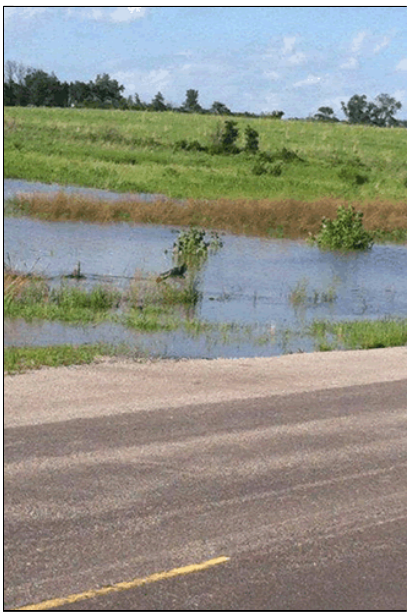
Northwest District

Water, Water, Everywhere!

Storm clouds rolling in are a familiar sight across Northwest Missouri this summer. This impressive cloud was spotted off Route DD in Daviess County.

Northwest Missouri is no stranger to flooding. Every spring it seems routes close across the region. This year, however, spring flooding has stretched into summer and threatens to continue into fall as well.

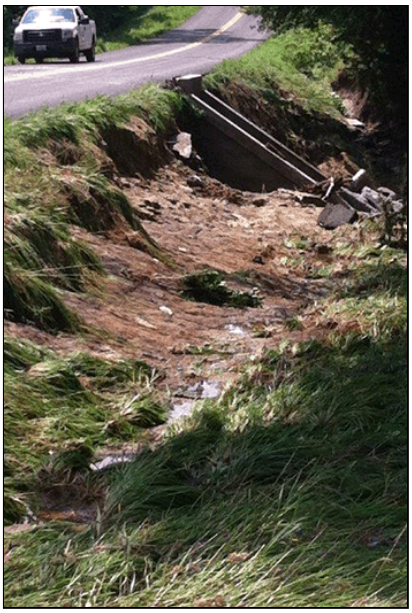
The excessive rainfall has closed roads, interrupted traffic, delayed construction and damaged roadways. Flooding began in May and has closed roads in 17 of the 20 counties in the district. It seems that each week crews have been busy not only closing and opening roadways, but repairing damaged roadways, culverts, shoulders and roadsides as you can see in the photos below.



Floodwaters inch closer to the roadway on U.S. Route 136 in Gentry County as the Middle Fork of the Grand River spilled out of its banks.

Flooding in Gentry County left behind damage to U.S. Route 136 causing headaches for crews and local residents.

It may not look like much water over the road when this photo was taken, but flooding over Route Z in Daviess County damaged the roadway and caused issues for this vehicle.



Damaged roadside around a box culvert on Route F in Gentry County.

Floodwaters crossed Route F in Gentry County and surrounding fields were flooded.

Water from the Grand River covered Route H in Gentry County washing crops and debris over the roadway.

Lost and Found

Crews near St. Joseph found this very distinctive bag in the passing lane of U.S. Route 36 just east of the Route AC overpass and brought it to Customer Service, hoping to reunite it with the owner. A search of the bag found no identification, though some of the items hinted that the owner might be local to St. Joseph. A Facebook post about the lost bag was seen, liked and shared by more than 36,000 people. The bag sat for a week with only one person calling in about it, but sadly, it wasn't their lost bag.

After a week, the Communications team brainstormed ideas and decided to reach out to our local television station. The station ran a story and photo of the bag on their Facebook page, Twitter, website and evening newscast. Within 24 hours, the owner called in. One of her friends had seen the story online and alerted her. She was on vacation, but her father came that day and picked up the bag. He was very thankful to have the now slightly-damaged bag back and even took a photo of it in the lobby with his cell phone to text to his daughter.

Thanks to our caring crews who rescued the bag before the contents were strewn across eastern St. Joseph and to our local media partners for turning a small story into a very happy ending!

Time To Head To Camp

For the sixth year, the Kansas City Chiefs have packed up, headed north and spent several weeks at Missouri Western

State University in St. Joseph as they prepare for their upcoming season.

This year, fans coming to watch the open practices held during Chiefs Training Camp have construction to contend with. Not only is Missouri Western updating their football complex, which will close some parking lots, but there is a resurfacing project set to begin just 10 days into camp on Interstate 29. Updates continue to go out to campus staff, city officials, county officials, local businesses, the chamber of commerce and other stakeholders to make this construction as much of a non-issue as possible for visitors and surrounding businesses.

The work is currently scheduled to begin Aug. 10 with night crews but a day crew may be added. Weather delays (see the above story) have impacted the contractor's work in other areas, pushing the resurfacing back for this project. If they need to bring in day crews, the impact may be felt a bit more for visitors, returning students and local residents alike.

For more info

Marcia Johnson
Communications Specialist
Northwest District
816.387.2495
Marcia.Johnson@modot.mo.gov

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St. Joseph, MO 64506-1399

Comments & Suggestions

We would like to hear from you. Send comments and suggestions to Tammy Wallace at Tammy.Wallace@modot.mo.gov.

Mission

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Northeast District

We're in Deep With Culvert Replacements

Each year from January to early March, MoDOT employees are on sight to inspect culvert pipes. These inspections look at the pipe's current condition, and if and when they need to be replaced.

This year, despite the projected 425 replacements, the department will likely replace closer to 500 culverts. Usually, flooding makes up roughly 5 percent of all additional pipes that have to be replaced. This year, due to the excessive flooding Northeast Missouri received, there has been about 15 percent, if not more.

The image above shows a culvert pipe that crews worked on this summer in Audrain County.

When asked about how flooding has caused this significant increase in culvert replacements, Jennifer Hinson, northeast district maintenance and traffic engineer, said, "The culvert pipes were not designed to carry that excessive amount of water in that short duration of time."

The reason these pipes fail is the water eats the asphalt around the pipes, shifting the pipe out of place, and sometimes causes half the pipe to go in a different direction.

Hinson also stated that culvert replacement costs will be about $200,000 more than originally intended this fiscal year because of the flooding.

Typically, a replacement can be done within one to three days with the help of about four crew members. Depending on the distance between pipes, the damages, and their size, this time frame can change. The Northeast District will indeed be deep in culvert pipe responsibilities for the next few months!

Around the District...

In the last three weeks, the Northeast District has been promoting its email updates and text alerts to try to get more customers signed up. This has primarily been done through social media and Chambers of Commerce newsletters, and includes a $15 ad on Facebook. As a result of this minimal promotion, the Northeast District received 180 new subscribers to email and 40 new subscribers to text alerts. Before the Facebook ad, 267 views of the video were received teaching users to sign up for alerts and updates, and after the ad, 2019 views were received of that video on Facebook.

Heath Otte, maintenance superintendent, shakes the hand of newly retired Greg Price. Greg retired as the Center Maintenance Supervisor after working for MoDOT for 30 years. Family, friends, and coworkers came together to congratulate Greg on July 27 at his retirement party in the Hannibal maintenance building.

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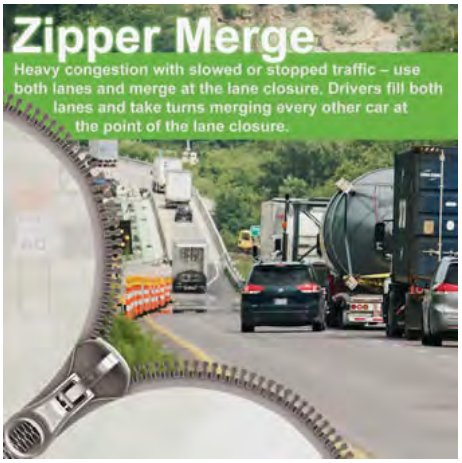
KansasCity District

Zipper Merging Will Help I-70 Travelers Through Work Zone Congestion



Drivers along Interstate 70 in the Kansas City area are getting used to a new way of merging through work zones - the zipper merge has been implemented and promoted in the Metro Area.

Two projects along I-70 in the Kansas City are using zipper merging in the work zones in both Jackson and Saline counties. Bridge repairs along I-70 at the Sni-A-Bar Bridges outside Oak Grove and Blackwater Bridges near Sedalia have created miles of backups and this newer merge method is hoping to help ease congestion.

“This is a different type of merge that motorists may not be used to seeing, but on highly congested routes, this is the best way to keep traffic moving safely," said Chris Redline, Kansas City assistant district engineer. "The safest merging is to think about two lanes merging into one. Not one lane merging into the other."

In most work zones, motorists start to merge as soon as they see warning signs, however, in dense, slow-moving traffic like on I-70, the open lane fills quickly.

When a driver in the closed lane can't move into the open lane in time, the closed lane ends forcing the vehicle to suddenly stop. The vehicle must then join traffic from a dead stop. This driving behavior can lead to lane switching, inconsistent driving speeds that cause crashes, long back-ups and road rage.

"Research shows these dangers decrease and traffic moves more smoothly when motorists use both lanes until reaching the defined merge area and then alternate merging every other vehicle - like the teeth of a zipper -- into the open lane," Redline said.

MoDOT Kansas City District Employees Keep It "All In the Family"

A family tradition of working at MoDOT in Kansas City continues, as sisters Kara and Erin Rottinghaus start their careers in the same building. And they weren’t the first. The sisters’ parents, Mike and Linda Rottinghaus started working with MoDOT over 20 years ago when they first met and fell in love.

“MoDOT helped them meet and literally helped this family start,” Erin said laughing, “Both of them no longer work for the department but it’s a strange coincidence that now their kids do.”

Erin was part of the MoDOT internship program and starting working in Kansas City right after she graduated from Mizzou in May of this year and became part of the design department. And Kara just started work as a Scout Operator about a month ago. With slightly different hours, both girls are just happy they’re in the same building and only need a quick walk for a five minute ‘hello’.

“We barely see each other, but I like that we’re close enough if we want to,” Kara said.

Both girls say the best part about having grown up with parents who had MoDOT careers was seeing firsthand the opportunities MoDOT provides.

“Regardless of where our careers take us, I can honestly say we have both learned so much just being here for the short time we have been,” Erin said. “I know wherever we are, having MoDOT on our resume will only add to it… that’s something our parents used to tell us, and something we both realize.”

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District Employees Sharpen Leadership Skills

Central District employees have been honing their leadership skills thanks in part to a seminar called The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership.

The two-day course, led by District Maintenance Superintendents Jim Hager (pictured right in red) and Mark Buscher, is based on a leadership book written by John C. Maxwell. Maxwell, a New York Times best-selling author and leadership expert, wrote the book and designed the course to help people learn how to be better leaders by addressing often overlooked qualities of leadership.

"The class is designed to show our employees how leaders should present themselves every day," said Hager. "It also helps us to see the bigger picture of what types of qualities a leader should possess and how a leader can adapt to and change the tone of everyday situations at home and in the workplace to create a more positive environment where things get accomplished."

The class began as a seminar for maintenance employees in the Maintenance Leadership Academy, but the class was so effective it has been expanded to include all district employees who have an interest in taking leadership roles.

"This class is great for anyone wanting to become a better leader," said district human resources manager Kim Hickey. "The class explains in detail the types of subjects that tend to get overlooked in leadership education - the importance of the people they surround themselves with, the necessity of trust, the element of respect, as well as several other quality lessons on life and leadership."

If you would like to find out more about Maxwell and his host of leadership books, blogs and seminars, please visit: http://www.johnmaxwell.com/

To find out more about the district leadership course, please contact Kim Hickey at Kimberly.Hickey@modot.mo.gov.

Recent graduates of the 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership class and instructor Jim Hager

Around the District

Here's a Look at a Couple of New Pieces of Equipment:

BOOM MOWER
This boom mower is a new edition in the southern part of our district! By adding this tool to our motorgraders we hope to increase our effectiveness year around. The boom mower creates added reach and improved visibility over other models

that mount to our tractors. A big thanks goes to Randy Colbert and crew for getting this piece of equipment operational. This should help us keep our roadsides in great condition!

SELF PROPELLED PAVER
This self-propelled paver is used for laying hot mix or cold mix on the roadway. Because it is self-propelled, it will be helpful in tight and high-traffic areas such as intersections because the machine does not have to be hooked up to a truck. This machine should eliminate or decrease the number of times an employee has to be between the truck and the machine to shovel material, which also increases safety. The paver also helps with production quality.

We're keeping the Wankums in Our Thoughts!
Allen Wankum, our senior facilities operation specialist, and his family recently received some very good news. Allen's wife, Lois, received a kidney and a pancreas as a result of an organ donor. Lois is doing well and is home from the

hospital. Congratulations and best wishes to the Wankums. Our thoughts are with you! Interested in learning more about organ donations? Visit: http://health.mo.gov/living/organdonor/registryinfo.php

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St. Louis District

Speaking Up About Safety Leads to Recognition

by Shaunda White

Commonly known as a quiet maintenance worker, Steve Clemons, is anything but when it comes to speaking up about safety in his building. His constant safety reminders, identifying potential hazards and concern for his coworkers' environment has earned him safety recognition for May.

Steve Clemons (center) receives safety recognition at the SL staff meeting from District Engineer Greg Horn (left) and Safety & Health Manager Scott Melton (right) on July 28.

Clemons works in the Bellefontaine maintenance building and was nominated for the Safety Employee of the Month recognition by his supervisor, Anthony Carusa.

At the beginning of his workday, Clemons provides his safety input when planning the crews' day of operations during risk base assessments. He is usually the first to recognize potential workplace hazards and report them.

Clemons has built rapport with the mechanics because of his passion to keep the fleet equipment safe and running smoothly. He makes sure his co-workers understand how to properly clean and maintain the sweeper after each use and dedicates time each day for post maintenance.

"Steve makes it clear that keeping himself and his co-workers safe is his main priority. His passion for safety shows through his work ethic and he is truly deserving of this recognition," said Carusa.

In addition to the recognition, Clemons will receive a safety PPE bag, two hours of paid time off and a Safety Employee of the Month certificate.

Around the District.....

Some Voice of SL members sit behind results from their food drive held within the district for the month of June. The food drive collected more than 2,000 pounds of food for the local food pantries within the SL region.

Maintenance workers complete the repairs on the Route HH bridge in Franklin County. The bridge closed April 8 due to erosion and reopened Friday, July 24.

For more info

Marie Elliott
Communications Manager

Comments & Suggestions

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Southwest District

Southwest District at Work

THAT'S THE BUTTON FOR THE HORN – Motorist Assist Operator Jeremy Belcavitch points out features of the incident response vehicle to a young visitor at Big Rig Night at Springfield's Battlefield Mall July 21. (Photo/David Mitchell)

FIELD TRIP – Bolivar Assistant Maintenance Supervisor Rick Crews (left), Assistant District Maintenance Engineer Jason Shafer (right) and Assistant Chief Engineer Kathy Harvey discuss a patching operation on Polk County Route BB northwest of Bolivar during Harvey's visit to the district July 27-28. (Photo/David Mitchell)

IN THE COMMUNITY – Members of the Southwest District Management Team listen to Rob Hunt, Watershed Center Coordinator for the Watershed Committee of the Ozarks, discuss the organization's work to protect the area's drinking water sources. (Photo/Jennifer Williams)

IN HARM'S WAY – This is one of two Truck Mounted Attenuators (TMA) struck by motorists over the past two weeks. The TMA above was struck at a mowing operation on Interstate 44 near the Missouri/Oklahoma state line. Click the image above to see a news story by a Springfield television station after the second TMA was hit on U.S. Route 60 between Kansas Expressway and Scenic Avenue in southwest Springfield during a striping operation. No one was seriously hurt in either incident.

Intern Spotlight: Southwest District Interns Get Real-World Experience

by Nicole Hodges

As I submerge myself in college curriculum, I soon discovered that attending class, getting involved in academic clubs and maintaining contact with my professors would not be enough to land me a career once graduation rolls around. That is why I, and seven other college students, ventured to MoDOT for some real-world experience this summer.

What some students may not know is that MoDOT internships are not only for engineering majors. MoDOT is a coexisting system of multiple departments including: communications, human resources, facilities,

Nicole Hodges

traffic, construction, maintenance, financial services, information systems and more. So students pursuing degrees other than engineering have opportunities as well.

Artur Graesser, a junior at Missouri University of Science and Technology working on his degree in both civil and architectural engineering, interned in the district Traffic Department this summer. He highly supports students' gaining out-of-the-classroom knowledge.

"Internships are only over the summer so it's a good way to earn money, as well as, experience the real world without falling behind in school," Graesser said.

"I was interested in MoDOT because I wanted to see the government and transportation side of civil engineering versus private construction," said Zach Smith, a junior civil engineering student at the University of Missouri – Columbia who interned with the Branson Project Office. "Since MoDOT was both, it happened to take care of what I was looking for."

Dustin Scales, a soon-to-be graduate at Missouri State University who spent his summer working with Information Systems, says that he wanted the internship experience "to sharpen interview skills, to network with people in the field, and to have relevant experience."

After we all attained our internships, we continuously learned new skills within our fields.

Dustin's favorite experiences while interning were installing security cameras along sections of interstate and programming JavaScript computer software.

"I have enjoyed learning about fracture critical bridges and going out to inspect them hands on. I have also learned more about steel and other components of bridges," Smith said.

As for me, I have enjoyed writing news releases, working closely with customers, meeting with local media outlets and attending public meetings in my role as a Communications intern.

Contemplating a MoDOT internship next summer?

Back row (left to right): Andrew Schmidt, Nevada Project Office; Artur Graesser, Traffic; Dustin Scales, Information Services; Zach Smith, Branson Project Office; Kyle Griffith, General Services. Front row (left to right): Greg Van Loon, Joplin Project Office; Nicole Hodges, Communications. Not pictured: Zach Dumas, Facilities; Joe Mulnik, Signals.

Smith offers that he "would recommend this internship to other students, especially those who are looking to get into the government sector."

Zach Dumas, a senior Construction Management major at Missouri State University who spent his summer with the Building Crew, says he would highly recommend an internship with MoDOT to other students. "The people, work and atmosphere at MoDOT are quite unique… It is an invaluable experience to have."

Our experiences here at MoDOT have helped ready us for the work force and have allowed us to establish a strong foundation for our future. For that, we are grateful.

For more info

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Southeast District

KRCC Visits Southeast District

Marcus and Hannah from the Kenny Rogers Children's Center (KRCC) recently paid the Southeast District office a visit!

Visit www.flickr.com/photos/modot_se to view more photos of Marcus and Hannah visiting the SE District Office or click on the image above.

Senior Procurement Agent Tammy Baker, Senior Risk Management Technician Sue Sifford, Senior Equipment Technician Jimmy Robinson, Senior Traffic Studies Specialist David Hollman and Executive Assistant Doris Dumey assisted in giving Marcus and Hannah a tour of the facility and providing activities to help them learn more about working at MoDOT.

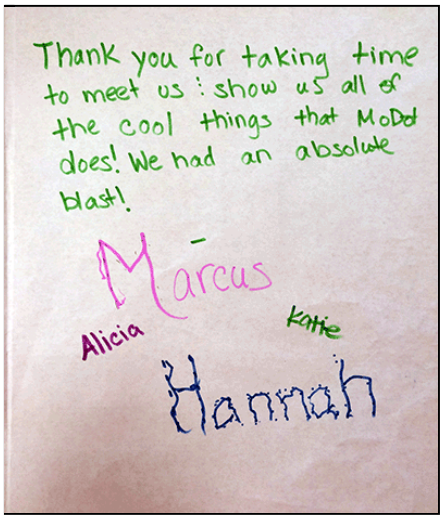
During the visit, Marcus and Hannah were able to take a close-up look at a functional, full-size traffic signal and see the inside of one of MoDOT's maintenance trucks. They were also presented with a few mementos to remember their visit!

KRCC is an outpatient, pediatric therapy center providing physical, occupational and speech therapy to over 400 special needs children in Southeast Missouri. KRCC has been around for over 40 years and during that time, no family has been charged for the services the children receive. The Center currently employs 12 full-time therapists, who work to provide exceptional therapy to make a difference in the lives of children with special needs.

The Center's mission is to improve the quality of life for children with special needs and their families throughout the community and region by providing a wide array of superior developmental and therapeutic services.

For more about the Kenny Rogers Children's Center, visit www.kennyrogerscenter.org.

Photo (below): Marcus and Hannah made MoDOT a thank you card to show their appreciation for their tour of the Southeast District Office.



Share The Blessing

SE Employees Help Coworkers in Need

Share The Blessing is a program exclusively for SE District employees supported by SE District employees. Through Share The Blessing, SE District employees provide assistance to fellow coworkers who are facing a tragic life event, such as a death in the family, loss of home, long-term medical hardship or an employee death.

Participants can enroll in automatic pay deduction or donate a one-time gift to the program. Employees do not need to be a member of the Credit Union to make a contribution. All contributions are tax deductible, confidential and can be made at the Credit Union any time.

For questions or to submit the name of an employee in need of assistance, please contact the Southeast District EAEC or any of the following board members. Calls are confidential.

Board members:

- Kimberly Arnold - 573.683.3291
- Doris Dumey - 573.472.5340
- Sheree Faenger - 573.518.1555
- Tim Ford - 417.469.9052
- Kerry Grogan - 417.932.4611
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